

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



For Immediate Release
July 11, 2006

Contact: Gregg W. Bortz
610-861-9734 or (cell) 202-222-5118

Congressman Dent votes to crack down on illegal Internet gambling

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) today hailed bipartisan passage a bill he co-sponsored to cut down the spread of illegal Internet gambling, an offshore industry that targets minors and Americans of modest means.

H.R. 4411, the Internet Gambling Prohibition and Enforcement Act, will help protect children from the dangers of Internet gambling sites, Congressman Dent said. Among other measures, the bill illegalizes the use of credit cards or money transfers to settle payment with an Internet gambling Web site. The bill passed 317 to 93.

“Internet gambling offers great risk and creates nothing of value,” Congressman Dent said. “These sites are already illegal in this country and there is no excuse for not supporting efforts to curtail them.”

These sites lack reliable age verification tools, so children of any age can easily access the sites and begin gambling. These sites also encourage gambling addiction in adults, because of the ease of access and the opportunity these sites provide to gamble with credit cards. As if these problems weren't serious enough, gambling sites also threaten our security by serving as fronts for criminal activities like money laundering and drug trafficking and as covers for terrorist financing.

Americans currently spend a staggering \$5.9 billion each year on Internet gambling. Congressman Dent cited the case of a college student in the Lehigh Valley who allegedly robbed a bank in support of an online gambling habit that cost him thousands of dollars. The student was suspended from school and possibly faces jail time.

“This case really drove the point home,” Congressman Dent said, expressing hopes the Senate will follow the House's lead on this bill. “Internet gambling is illegal, and this bill simply clarifies that.”

The Internet Gambling Prohibition and Enforcement Act cracks down on Internet gambling in four ways:

- Clears up ambiguities in the Wire Act and clarifies that the provisions of the law (which bans the use of wire communication facilities to transfer bets or wagers or related money) apply to Internet gambling.
- Increases the maximum penalty for Wire Act violations.
- Authorizes law enforcement to pursue injunctions against persons or businesses that aid Internet gambling.
- Supports international efforts to combat illegal gambling and money laundering.

###